

ASHLAND DAILY PRESS

Mental illness deserves equal coverage

Ashland Daily Press Editorial

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The recognition that mental illnesses are treatable just like any other has been a long time coming. In fact, it still hasn't arrived, at least as far as many group health plans are concerned.

For some insured, there is a different level of coverage for mental health services than there is for other medical services, and that is a disparity that should not be allowed.

The House last week passed the Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction equity Act on a bipartisan vote of 268-148 (including a yes vote from the 7th District Congressman, Dave Obey). That would prohibit insurers and group health plans from using more restrictive criteria for mental health services than what they apply to medical or surgical services.

The legislation applies only to plans that provide mental health services and does not require that those which do not add a new layer of service.

Mental health is as important to productivity as any other kind of health - perhaps even moreso. Employers and insurers must recognize that. This legislation is one way to ensure it happens.